Canal Banks specially in drought affected Area of the Country;

(b) if so, whether Government have received any Scheme or proposal from the States in relation to afforestation in 'Bald Hills' which are badly affected by drought; and

(c) whether Government propose to develop Forests in the drought and famine affected tribal districts of Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Afforestation and tree planting programmes include coverage of bald hills and canal banks in the drought affected areas. Implementation of these programmes is at the State level and funding for this purpose is under the ongoing Central and State Plan schemes, like Drought Prone Areas Programme, Rehabilitation of Degraded Forests, Integrated Wastlands Development Projects Scheme, Fuelwood and Fodder Projects Scheme, externally aided Forestry Projects, Desert Development Programme, Strip Plantations along river and canal banks, etc.

(c) The drought affected tribal districts of Orissa like Bolangir, Kalahandi and Koraput are already included in the afforestation and social forestry programmes which are being implemented by the State Government of Orissa.

Proposals of Orissa pending forest clearance

4105. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY:
SHRI PRAVAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY:
SHRIMATI ILA PANDA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposals from Orissa for forest clearance under the Forest Conservation Act are pending before Government of India; and

(b) if so, by when a decision is likely to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Two proposals pending with Government of India under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 are under active consideration of this Ministry.

Granting title deeds to encroachers on Forest land

4106. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that State Governments are granting title deeds to encroachers on forest land with little or perfunctory safeguard; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the names of the States who have granted the title deeds and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Before granting title deeds to encroachers on forest land, State Governments are required to obtain prior approval of the Central Government for regularisation of encroachment on the forest land under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. For this State Governments have to send a formal proposal in the prescribed proforma to the Central Government. Each proposal is examined for final decision in accordance with the provisions of guidelines issued for regularisation of encroachment on forest land. If the proposal is agreed to, necessary safeguards are stipulated and the

State Governcents are required to comply these stipulated safeguards.

(b) In accordance with the provisions of the detailed guidelines issued for regularisation of encroachments on forset land, formal approval for diversion of 1.03 lakh ha. and 1,367 ha. of forest land in Madhya Pradesh and Andman and Nicobar Islans respectively have been accorded under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for regularisation of encroachments on forest land.

Siltation of Bharat River

4107. SHRI D. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bharat River (Bharat Puzha) considered as the life-line of Kerala State is becoming a sandy desert due to high siltation on account of cutting of forests;

(b) if so, what action Government have taken or contemplate to take to prevent siltation and make the river safe;

(c) whether Government have received any scheme from the State Government of Kerala in this regard; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken thereon and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRON MENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) The rate of siltation of Bharat river is high, but it is not on account of cutting of forests.

(b) and (c) The Government of Kerala have not sent any specific forestry scheme to prevent siltation of Bharat river.

(d) Question does not arise.

Extinction of Siberian Cranes

4108. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a press news-item captioned 'Crane import proves an exercise in vain as reported in the Indian Express dated 10th March, 1993;

(b) if so, the facts and details in this regard;

(c) whether due to negligence the Siberian cranes are facing extinction; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) The Government has seen the news report.

(b) An experiment was carried out to release regard Sibelian Crane Chicks in the fast dwndiling population of the Western flock of Siberian Cranes which winters in Bharatpur. The experiment has been carried out in collaboration with International Crane Foundation of USA and Ornithologists of Russia and Japan, in Keoladeo Ghana National Park, Bharatpur, during this year. The objectives of the experiment *inter alia* were to establish the migration route of these birds from India to Siberia, the exact beeding ground of this population in Siberia and to build up the dwindling stock of the flock. Two Siberian Crane chicks were brought from Russia. Before their import into the country they were subjected to full scale health checks in Russia. On arrival on 12-2-1993 these were taken to Bharatpur directly where arrangements for their sepeate quaantine were